

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES:

Your Child at Three Years



What are developmental milestones?

Developmental milestones are skills that are achieved by most children by a certain age. They include physical, social, emotional, cognitive and communication skills that are appropriate for the child's age. Milestones give important clues to a child's health and well-being. Any child who is delayed in their milestones should be further evaluated by a health or developmental professional.

- **Social and Emotional milestones** include how children learn about their own emotions and the emotions of others. These milestones also involve learning how to interact and play with other people.
- **Language and Communication milestones** involve language, speech, and nonverbal communication (for example, hand gestures or facial expressions). These milestones include a baby's babbling, first words, and even the art of listening to others and holding a conversation.
- **Movement/Physical development** involves both gross-motor skills and fine-motor skills. Gross motor skills are typically the first to develop. Gross motor skills include the ability to support their head, sit up, stand, crawl and walk. Fine-motor skills involve precise movements such as grasping a spoon, picking up small objects, and drawing.
- **Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving) milestones** are centered on a child's ability to think, learn and solve problems. Cognitive milestones include an infant learning how to react to different facial expressions and a preschooler learning to say the alphabet.

As a parent, you spend the most time with your child and know them the best. If your child is not meeting these milestones for his or her age, or if you think there could be a problem with the way your child plays, learns, speaks, or acts, it is important to tell your health care provider so they can assess your child's development. Discuss any concerns with your primary care provider at your child's 3-year well child exam.

Your Child at 3 Years Old

This is what most children do at this age:

Social/Emotional

- Copies adults and friends
- Shows affection for friends without prompting
- Takes turns in games
- Shows concern for crying friend
- Understands the idea of "mine" and "his" or "hers"
- Shows a wide range of emotions
- Separates easily from mom and dad
- May get upset with major changes in routine
- Dresses and undresses self

Language/Communication

- Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps
- Can name most familiar things
- Understands words like "in," "on," and "under"
- Says first name, age, and sex
- Names a friend
- Says words like "I," "me," "we," and "you" and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)
- Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time
- Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts
- Plays makebelieve with dolls, animals, and people
- Does puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces
- Understands what "two" means
- Copies a circle with pencil or crayon
- Turns book pages one at a time
- Builds towers of more than 6 blocks
- Screws and unscrews jar lids or turns door handle

Movement/Physical Development

- Climbs well
- Runs easily
- Pedals a tricycle (3wheel bike)

Tell your doctor if you notice any of these signs of developmental delay for this age. Every community should also have an early childhood intervention program that can help assess your child.

Reference and Resources

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/concerned.html>
<http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/PreschoolProg.html>

To refer a child to Texas Early Childhood Intervention Services for developmental evaluation and developmental support services, call: 1-800-628-5115

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